

"LIVE" Online Session Transcript of

"ACUPUNCTURE: EAST MEETS WEST IN REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE"

September 19, 2007 8-9 PM

with

Laura Shahinian Kara, MS, LAc
Licensed Acupuncturist

mwelch	New England Fertility Institute invites you to an actual demonstration of acupuncture on October 17 at our Shelton office 4 Corporate Dr , 2nd floor from 6-7:30pm. Laura Kara, will demonstrate acupuncture used in treating infertility and Patty O'Neill Nurse Practitioner will answer your questions regarding complimentary practice of IVF and acupuncture. Wine and cheese will be served. For more information email mwelch@nefertility.com Rsvp 203-942-6606 or by email. Please feel free to bring guests as well.
mwelch	Correction on the phone number 203-942-6206
mwelch	Laura Kara M.S.m L.A.c practice in Westport Connecticut and Bethel Connecticut. She is board certified by the NCCAOM and licensed in the state of Connecticut.
	carrie joined.
mwelch	Hello Carrie Welcome to the chat. Please feel free to post your question
laurakara	Hello
mwelch	Typos are forgiven during chats as to accommodate questions and time
laurakara	Let me take this opportunity to give you a brief intro to acupuncture and how it supports and affects fertility. One of the oldest forms of healing, dating 5000 years Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been used to balance the body's systems to work together. Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing. Acupuncture needles are inserted into points on the body known as meridian channels. Like rivers flowing to unblock any stagnation and imbalances. This helps blood flow to the uterus, calm the nervous system and help the entire endocrine system to come back to balance.
mwelch	How long has acupuncture been used in treating patients undergoing treatment for infertility.
Laurakara	In modern times, you've heard about acupuncture supporting ART. Acupuncture has been used for centuries to promote and affect fertility, but in the last five years, it has exploded. Since a German study came out about five years ago, where they took 160 women undergoing IVF, 80 of them having acupuncture before and after ET, the conception rate in those women was almost double to the group who didn't have the acupuncture.
	kriamy joined.
mwelch	Welcome kriamy.

laurakara	The acupuncture in that particular study was isolated to the moment before and after IVF. what that particular protocol accomplished was a calming of the nervous system, specifically the sympathetic output (this is your "fight or flight" mechanism that should be calm when implantation is trying to take place) The acupuncture works to produce endorphins to calm the brain and nervous system, some of the points are also used to bring more blood flow to the uterus.
mwelch	Just a reminder that we will be offering an actual demonstration of acupuncture for fertility on October 17th from 6-7:30 pm in our Shelton office at 4 Corporate Dr. Email marion at mwelch@nefertility for more information, spouses, friends sbilings etc are welcomed. Patty O'Neill our nurser practitioner will answer you questions regarding complimentary practice on acupuncture and IVF
mwelch	At what stage of the IVF process do you adminster acupuncture, Is it done at home, office or at IVF surgical suite?
laurakara	Needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord and brain. They change the experience of pain as well as release other chemicals and hormones which influence the body's own internal regulating system.
mwelch	Does the reproductive endocrinologist coordinate directly with you for the acupuncture.
laurakara	Great question Marion. I prefer to do acupuncture for three to six months before IVF is to take place. Often, though, patients come to see me when they are already in the process of rest-down drugs or stimulating drugs. TCM works to regulate the body. Imagine that your body is like a garden. In order for the seeds to grow into healthy trees and flowers, you need to have good soil. Acupuncture, accompanied with lifestyle changes, diet, etc. work to nouris the soil. Then, when it's time for IVF, or other forms of ART, you have a healthier template from which to work. I feel that the success rate goes up dramatically when this happens.
mwelch	Can you use acupuncture in conjunction with a straight Clomid cycle. At what point in the cycle do you do the acupuncture?
laurakara	Acupuncture alone, at the time of ART, preferably 9 days before transfer, the day before transfer, day of transfer and then three days after transfer are extremely helpful.
mwelch	Laura Kriamy would like to know if acupuncture is used to enhance prescription meds or in place of it
laurakara	yes. acupuncture can be done with a straight clomid cycle. It will help with stress hormones, bring more blood to the uterus. Each case is different, meaning each woman I see, whether all doing the same ART protocol, is treated differently, depending on their underlying imbalances.
laurakara	Hi Laura,
laurakara	great question. that depends on what medicaitons you are taking. for example, acupuncture works to help with any ill side affects from meds, but will not interfere with their efficacy. another example, with high BP, acupuncture can help to reduce this, so that people can eventually get off their meds
carrief	Hi, do you use herbs as well?

laurakara	Hi Carrie,
mwelch	Laura why 9 days before the transfer? Is this to make the uterus more receptive?
laurakara	sorry. Except for basic knowledge in Chinese formulas, I'm not a trained herbalist. Often, I see people when they are doing drugs, and I would not like to interfere with that process. However, I recommend a lot of dietary changes. I feel that food acts as medicine and the diet for fertility enhancing is very important. If you want a recommendation for herbs, you can call me or e-mail me.
laurakara	Yes. This helps to bring more blood flow to the uterus, which has shown to affect the lining.
carriief	Thank you. I am actually seeing an acupuncturist who uses Chinese herbs but I am only having acupuncture at the moment. My acupuncturist seems to think I should be using herbs as well but I don't want to be taking too much right now so it is good to hear that acu can be effective without herbs.
laurakara	Carrie, you can ask your acupuncturist if she feels it will make a great difference in your underlying pattern of disharmony. If, however you are doing drugs with your Endo. doc, I don't recommend mixing them.
mwelch	Carrie, are you also being seen by a reproductive endocrinologist? If you are on any medications you want to make sure your physician and herbalist are aware of each other's treatment.
mwelch	Laura, do you come to the patient right after IVF to perform the acupuncture?
laurakara	when I'm available on the days that transfer is taking place, I will come to do the IVF acu protocol. But only if the patient has had at least one experience with acupuncture before. don't want to introduce something new at the time of transfer
mwelch	What does the acupuncture accomplish, after the transfer?
kriamy	how long is each session & does it depend on underlying diagnosis
laurakara	in answer to marion's question, acupuncture after transfer has been shown to decrease any fluttering, or contractions in the uterus which would impede implantation.
mwelch	Is there any soreness due to the acupuncture
laurakara	Each session at my office is about an hour long. I do Japanese meridian acupuncture which is a longer session, treating both the front of the body and the back and including moxibustion which is burning an herb on the point or on the needle to heat the body (in situations of cold and dampness..a TCM term)
mwelch	How many needles approximately do you use ?
laurakara	Acupuncture is generally painless, however you do want to create a sensation of heaviness in the body (called DaQi in Chinese) this is when you know that the Qi (pronounced chee) is moving and working.

laurakara	TCM acupuncture generally uses few needles, as they are also treating with herbs. The acupuncture I do is a little more involved than that. Each case is different. I may use as little as 8 needles or 40, depending on the amount of things I'm treating in one session.
mwelch	Laura, How do the reproductive endocrinologist look at acupuncture?
mwelch	Could you list the benefits of acupuncture for fertility patients?
laurakara	I'm really happy to see that the RE's are open to acupuncture. After all, it's a complete different paradigm of healing than western medicine is and very abstract until you begin to understand it. I think that RE's see it as a nervous system calming mechanism and while it does that beautifully, it does so much more. I think the studies that are finally being done are improving the reputation of acupuncture as a healing science.
carrief	Where do you practice?
laurakara	Benefits of Acupuncture for Fertility: 1. reduction of blood flow impedance in the uterine arteries. 2. decreasing sympathetic output (stress hormones) and increase of beta-endorphine hormones. 3. Probably the most important, is to treat the underlying imbalances well in advance. this leads to over-all better health, which has proven to improve the health of the entire hormonal system
mwelch	I know in our practice we work with acupuncture as a complimentary treatment. Laura has worked with some of our patients.
Laurakara	laurakara
mwelch	Laura practices in Westport and Bethel Ct. Her phone numbers are 203-470-3420 and Bethel 203-470-7072.
carrief	Thank you
mwelch	You can meet Laura and see her perform acupuncture on October 17th in our Shelton office. Feel free to email me at mwelch@nefertility.com for more information.
laurakara	correction on the phone numbers. Westport: 454-3420, the other is my Bethel office and cell, so feel free to call that at any time.
lubnapal	joined.
mwelch	Laura, what should we look for in choosing an acupuncturist?
mwelch	Welcome Lubnapal. Please feel free to post a question for Laura
lubnapal	Thanks Laura! My apologies for the delayed entry...
carrief	You mentioned a diet for fertility. Is there anything specific you suggest? I do take some supplements, for fertility and otherwise - do you advocate these?
laurakara	Great question Marion. In choosing an acupuncturist, first you want to make sure they've had extensive training in Chinese medicine and have gone to an accredited school for this. They should be board certified by the NCCAOM and they should have a lot of experience in

	treating fertility issues. If you decide to do acupuncture and herbs from a TCM practitioner, they should have you taking your BBT so that they can track your chart to then translate that to a Chinese medical diagnosis and treat you more specifically for fertility. IF you're already working with an RE, make sure they know all the protocols for treating with acupuncture as a support
mwelch	Again for contacting Laura directly , her numbers are 203-454-3420 and 203-470-7072. You may also email me mwelch@nefertility.com
laurakara	Carrie, I would need to get a diagnosis before giving you specific advice, but one of the things all women should do for fertility is get off a lot of raw foods, dairy products and anything that could cause an allergic reaction.
lubnapal	Laura..are the accupuncture protocols tailored to a patient's need/what parameters are involved in assessing the appropriate protocol?
mwelch	What is BBT? Basel Body temperature?
laurakara	Lubnapal, in answer to your question. yes, when seeing an acupuncturist, they will diagnose you in accordance to chinese diagnosis and these points are tailored to each individual, although a lot of common points are used.
carrief	Laura, i have been charting my temps and shown them to my acupuncturist but she seems to think they are 'fine' but I am detecting a luteal phase defect (among other things) especially as the last couple of cycles my luteal phase has only been 9-11 days.
	kprial joined.
mwelch	Welcom Kprial. Feel free to post a queston for Laura
laurakara	I would need to see them, but Luteal phase defect is a common problem with fertility.
lubnapal	While realizing that individual protocols need to be tailored for each patient, can a consensus be achieved regarding standardization of protocols from the perspective of clinical research?
carrief	You mentioned not having too many raw foods; is this because of the Spleen out of interest?
laurakara	There are several patterns of disharmonies that affect a person's imbalances. Yes, there can be a consensus in each of those patterns, as how to treat (although you also have to realize that there are several different styles of acupuncture which treat differently, but all trying to achieve the same goal)
lubnapal	Thanks!
kriamy	have to leave a little early...but this was very informative. thank you!!!
laurakara	re: raw foods. yes, There are three major meridians that go to the reproductive organs. The spleen, liver and kidneys. raw foods dampen the spleen and create cold and damp in the ovaries and uterus (often seen with cysts)
mwelch	goodbye and good luck
	kriamy left.
mwelch	Again if you would lke to see an actual demonstration of acupuncture used in fertility, please join Laura on October 17th at 6 pm at New England Fertility's Shelton office 4 Corporate Drive.

carrief	Laura, I had an IUI procedure today and saw my acupuncturist briefly for a short protocol afterwards. Do you mind telling me when you would suggest I go back, if possible, and would you suggest the uterus points being used - to aid implantation?
laurakara	Carrie, make sure your acupuncturist knows points for preventing miscarriage and tonifying the uterus. at this point its still okay to do strong manipulation with acupuncture, but in a few days she should keep the sessions short and only do points that are not contraindicated
mwelch	Please post final your final questions for Laura.
carrief	Thank you - when you say a few days - when do you mean? And points for preventing miscarriage - should they be used soon?
lubnapal	Many Thanks! Would you be doing any demo sessions after Oct 17th? I will be away at a conference and would love to know more of this modality.
mwelch	Perhaps please stay in touch with our website www.nefertily.com or feel free to contact Laura directly.
lubnapal	Sure.
laurakara	Carrie, I'm happy to go into more detail afterwards or tomorrow on the phone. bye to those who have signed off. I will be doing a demo on the 17th.
carrief	Thanks very much again - very interesting!
mwelch	My email address is mwelch@nefertily.com . We will most likely follow this chat up with a nutritionist and perhaps a herbalist that Laura recommends
lubnapal	Thanks again!
mwelch	Good night to all of you .Thank you . We wish you the best in you journey/
carrief	That would be great - look forward to that M.
laurakara	This was such a pleasure for me. please feel free to contact me with any other questions. Acupuncture and fertility as a subject that is close to my heart. Best of luck to all.
mwelch	This transcript will be posted at www.nefertility.com